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ceived very much attention, we have endeavored to attract notice to what we have been accustomed to regard as the main factors in the extinction of species and of higher groups. That there is a limit to the age of species as well as to individuals almost goes without saying. As there is in each individual a youth, manhood and old age, so species and orders rise, culminate and decline, and nations have risen, reached a maximum of development and decayed. The causes, however complex, are, in the case of plants and animals, apparently physical; they are general and pervasive in their effects, and have been in operation since life began; there have been critical periods in palæontological as well as geological history, and periods of rapid and widespread extinction as well as a continual, progressive dying-out of isolated species. Such extinction was, so to speak, a biological necessity, for otherwise there would have been no progress, no evolution of higher types.

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EDITORS' TABLE.

EDITORS: A. S. PACKARD AND E. D. COPE.

—In entering upon the twentieth year of the publication of this magazine, the friends of the undertaking may congratulate themselves on its signs of good health and strength, as seen in the portly appearance of the later volumes. Having passed through the perils of infancy and childhood, may we hope that in entering upon years of maturity it will, with each volume, gain in strength and character as an exponent of American natural science.

While the magazine has doubled in size, the number of departments and of assistant editors has correspondingly increased. More space is given to reports of scientific discoveries so as to render the magazine more useful to science-teachers, and the working naturalist.

Our great need is, more numerous plates and cuts; to secure this end our friends are urged to aid in enlarging our subscription list.

Our hearty thanks are due to the public for its support, and to our contributors and assistant editors. Depending on their aid and good will we hope to make the future volumes of the NATURALIST still more deserving of public support and esteem.

—The proposition to create an Academy of Sciences of the State of Indiana, suggests some reflections as to the future of such bodies in the United States. It has appeared to us desirable that each State should have, at some future time, its academy of sciences, but we have refrained from enlarging on the topic, since it is plain that, as regards the greater number of States, the time has not yet arrived. But Indiana now comes to the front, and if she succeeds in establishing a real academy of sciences, she will hold the place of honor in our history. There is no doubt that among the men of her leading schools, her geological surveys, etc., she has the material for the organization of such a body. In most of the States there is no material out of which to make an academy of sciences, and in none is there much material.

Of course all are agreed that merit only shall be the test of membership in such a body; but all are not agreed as to what the test of merit ought to be. There can, however, be but one test, and that is the one which has been adopted in the old countries, and by our own National Academy in recent years, and that is the test of *meritorious work done*. It may be that this is an imperfect guide to the merits of some men, but it is the best we have, and the one open to the fewest objections. Moreover the estimation of the merit of work done should be guided by the attribute of quality rather than of quantity, and chiefly by the quality of originality or novelty. There are many meritorious compilations, but the best of them stand in the second rank of merit. The first rank is held by the discovery of new truths. As the amount of truth yet to be learned far exceeds that which has been acquired hitherto, its discovery is the business of the scientific man. Since the truths that lie at the foundation of a majority of phenomena are yet unknown, the work of compilation had better be left to those who for any cause whatever are incapable of original research.

In the first organization of an academy of sciences, the seeds of its future success or failure are sown. The admission of persons to membership who regard science as a mere ornament, or amusement, will vitiate its future life. Still more will the entrance into its councils of persons who regard membership merely as a step to personal advancement. In many portions of this country, especially in some regions where intelligence is not wanting, the fact of the specialization of men's abilities is not sufficiently ad-

mitted. In such communities it is still believed that, intellectually speaking, "all men are born equal," or nearly so. In such places a fluent expression of interest in some form of human progress, will be regarded as identical with ability to aid in that form of human progress.

Since academies of sciences in this country are not yet sustained by government grants, it will be necessary to have a lay membership, whose annual dues will meet the necessary expenses. There should therefore be two degrees of association, viz., membership and fellowship; the latter to be conferred exclusively on persons who have contributed important work to the progress of science, chiefly of original research. Such fellowship becomes an order of merit, which serves both as a stimulus and as a reward for work.

The local academies of science hitherto established, generally possess libraries and museums. This property may become a great evil, as, for instance, when its conservators claim equal place in the councils of the academy with the scientific men. But it could be administered by a financial or property committee of lay members, who should act with the fellows, when management of financial matters is in question.

— The numbers of the *AMERICAN NATURALIST* for 1885 were issued at the following dates: January, Dec. 30th, 1884; February, Jan. 19th, 1885; March, Feb. 24th; April, March 21st; May, April 20th; June, May 18th; July, June 20th; August, July 28th; September, Aug. 15th; October, Sept. 22d; November, Oct. 23d; December, Nov. 25th.

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RECENT LITERATURE.

HORNADAY'S *TWO YEARS IN THE JUNGLE*.¹—The author spent two years in the East Indies dividing his time between India, Ceylon, the Malay peninsula and Borneo, collecting specimens for Ward's establishment at Rochester. Wherever he went Mr. Hornaday kept his eyes open. Of apparently a hardy, iron constitution, which was not subdued by repeated attacks of the jungle fever, of great industry and bravery, and withal a good storyteller, the result is one of our best books of travel in countries which have been ransacked by English and German travelers. The interest of the narrative is sustained throughout, and if at times too much slang is introduced, we forgive these slight derelictions in view of the manifest honesty, kind-heartedness and scientific zeal of the author. Though by profession a taxider-

¹ *Two Years in the Jungle*.—The experiences of a hunter and naturalist in India, Ceylon, the Malay peninsula and Borneo. By WILLIAM T. HORNADAY, with maps and illustrations. New York, Charles Scribner's Sons. 1885. 12mo, pp. 512. \$4.00.